

My Father's Son

by Syl

Category: Nightwing

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 1999-07-29 09:00:00

Updated: 1999-07-29 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 09:37:24

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,703

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Dick Grayson recalls one of his last conversations

My Father's Son

Summary: Dick recalls one of his last conversations with his mother.

Disclaimer: Disclaimer: All the characters are owned by DC Comics and Time/Warner; this is an original story that does not intend to infringe on their copyright. Feedback is welcome!

Copyright 1999

My Father's Son By Syl Francis

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on..." (The Tempest IV,i)

I have my mother's eyes. At least that's what I've been told. By just about everybody.

"Oh, Mary! Is this Dicky? I can't believe it! It seems like he was born only yesterday!"

I shuffle uncomfortably. Why do grown-ups always ask such dumb questions?

"He has your eyes, Mare...and your nose. Land sakes, Mary...he's the spitting image of you!"

I **hate** it when they say that! I'm a guy...not some sissy girl. A guy's s'posed to look like his Dad. But even Dad says I look like Mom.

"And how old are you now, Dicky?" When she asks the question, her voice goes up an octave like she's talking to a baby. What's next, I wonder? Cootchie- cootchie-coo?

I glower at her. Why doesn't she go away? Mom and I have to get to the tent to rehearse. Dad's waiting for us already.

"Nine," I mutter.

"Richard!" Mom's voice shows her shock at my rudeness. Calling me by my real name means that I'm gonna catch it later, too. Probably a whole lot sooner than later, though.

"Oh, that's all right, Mary!" Her friend waves off Mom's protests. "I know all about high-strung performers...especially the Star of the Show." She laughs good-naturedly, and bids her farewells. "Good luck tonight, Mary. I'll be in the audience cheering!"

As we walk to the tent, Mom places her hand on my shoulder and gives it a gentle squeeze.

"Dicky, you were rude." Funny, I can't remember Mom ever raising her voice. I guess I probably idealize her, but still. As often as I think of her, I can't recall even one single incident when she's raised her voice.

"Care to talk about it?" she asks. I kick at an empty popcorn bag as we walk. I shrug my shoulders, hiding behind nine-year-old ignorance. Mom stops and holds me firmly by my cape. "Let me rephrase that. That was not a request, young man. You were rude to a very old, very dear friend." Mom pauses. She brushes my hair back with her fingers and lightly strokes my cheek.

"Harriet Cooper was my mother's dearest and closest friend. They practically grew up together. I've called her 'Aunt Harriet' for as long as I can remember. Since my folks' deaths, Aunt Harriet's the closest thing to family that I've got. She was there on the day you were born and hasn't seen you in almost eight years."

As she speaks, Mom fiddles with my cape. That's another thing I remember about Mom. Her hands. Mom has the most beautiful hands. Not soft, though, and she has one of the strongest, surest grips in the business. Still, her hands are beautiful and always occupied with something: sewing our bright, colorful costumes, cooking dinner, kneading dough, combing her long, silky hair, or giving Dad a backrub.

"Well?" She waits patiently. I hang my head in shame. It's hard to tell her. I mean, I love Mom. She's wonderful! The best Mom in the whole world. And the most beautiful. I know 'cause Dad told me.

And that's the problem! Mom's so beautiful. I look like Mom. I'm a guy. Guys aren't s'posed to be beautiful.

Look at Dad! Dad's in great shape...he has a perfect physique, perfect form, and some kind of internal gyroscope that always helps him know which way is up. I guess I got that from him, 'cause I'm always aware of up and down, too. Mom gets mixed up sometimes, so she still has to practice with a safety line. And when we're learning a

new routine, it takes her a little longer...okay, *a lot* longer to get the new routines. Sometimes long after I've mastered it and recommended changes to Dad...

I ask Dad why Mom takes so long. A guy could grow old and gray waiting on her!

"Remember, son, your Mom's a Gaje. We have to give her a little more time...it's only fair. She wasn't born into a circus family, like you'n me. It's hard enough for someone born in the circus to become an aerialist, but it's in our blood." Dad smiles, picks me up and easily throws me up and over. I somersault over his head and land behind him. A perfect landing!

"For an outsider, an adult no less, to learn the ropes...they have to start with the ABCs. It's almost impossible, in fact. And remember, your Mom's one of the best in the world!"

We both smile proudly at that.

"Maybe Mom has Romany blood in her, too, but just doesn't know it," I suggest.

"Well, if she doesn't, then she has the next best thing. A husband and son who love her even if it takes her a little longer to learn the routines, right?"

I nod emphatically in agreement...

So, if I get my athletic ability from Dad, why didn't I get his looks, too? He has dark hair like me, but his is wavy and mine's straight like Mom's. He has gray eyes, which I think are *so* cool. Especially when he gets mad at someone. Dad doesn't have to *say* anything. He just glares at someone with those cold gray eyes and they fold. Boy! No way I'll ever be able to do *that* with these "cute" baby-blue eyes.

Thanks Mom.

Anyway, as great as Dad looks, no one will *ever* mistake him for a girl. Dad's a man and he looks like a man. He's not pretty like Mom...far from it! I think he's handsome, of course, and so does Mom. But I've overheard some of the rowdies making jokes about Dad. Something about being dropped on his face when he was born.

Mom says that on the day they met, Dad had broken his jaw. It took four reconstructive surgeries to finally get him looking a little bit normal again, but gone were his "matinee idol looks," as Dad would jokingly explain.

I look up at Mom. She's still waiting for my explanation.

"I'm sorry, Mom," I finally apologize. "It's just that...I *hate* it when people say I look like you." I turn away, ashamed of my open admission. "I want to look like Dad! I want to be like Dad! Why did I have to be born looking like a girl?"

Mom's reaction is unexpected. She breaks out in musical peals of laughter. At my outraged look, she quickly covers her mouth, but I can see the tears beginning to fall from her eyes. Angry, I begin to

stomp away, but she tugs at my cape and hauls me back.

"I'm sorry, sweetheart," Mom apologizes, still laughing. "I didn't mean to laugh at you, honest!" She'd be more believable if she'd stop snickering, I think. "It's just that...Dicky, you *do* look like your Dad."

Aw, now Mom's doing her Mom thing--basically lying to me to make me feel better. I stand with my arms crossed, my disbelief obvious.

"Honey, there's more to looking like someone than physical appearance. Oh, there's no doubt in anyone's mind that you're my son...not with that face. But, sweetie, everything else about you...you *are* your father's son. You have the Grayson ability to fly higher and faster than anyone else. You have absolutely no fear of heights...Your Dad took you up on the highwire the day we brought you home from the hospital." Mom pauses in reflection.

"Your Dad said that it was to introduce you to the heights. I almost killed him that day, I was *so* livid. But, you know your father and that glib tongue of his. He convinced me that a Grayson belongs seventy feet in the air, and that it was a 'family tradition'. You've been up at least once a day, everyday since." Mom smiles.

"But there's more, Dicky. The way you turn your head. Or that funny way you have of quirking one eyebrow when something puzzles you, and you're totally concentrating. That's all your Dad. Plus your smile...you have your Dad's smile, the kind that can just light up a room! Oh, Dicky, I could probably name hundreds more little things, but they're not important. What *is* important is the kind of man you're going to grow up to be. Your father's the most considerate, loving, gentle man I know. And you're your father's son."

I sit in my darkened Bludhaven apartment, and smile, remembering Mom's words.

The dream is so real. The day is indelibly imprinted in my mind: A cold, crisp October morning. The leaves are just starting to turn and everything just seems cleaner and brighter.

That night my parents fall to their deaths.

Tonight's the third night in a row I've dreamt about my mother. She was so beautiful, and I look like her. I know, 'cause my Dad told me.

I look at the bed-side clock. It's after ten. I'm late. The call came earlier this evening. Bruce needs me back in Gotham City. I quickly get dressed. My costume's different these days. No cape. No bright colors. No reminders of the happier times. As I carefully put on my black bat-shaped mask, I ironically realize that Mom was right.

I *am* my father's son.

The End

####

End
file.